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The present invention relates to peptides which exhibit potent anti-retroviral activity. The peptides of the invention comprise DP178 (SEQ ID:1) peptide corresponding to amino acids 638 to 673 of the HIV-1<sub>LAI</sub> gp41 protein, and fragments, analogs and homologs of DP178. The invention further relates to the uses of such peptides as inhibitory of human and non-human retroviral, especially HIV, transmission to uninfected cells.